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July 8, 2019

## AUCCCD STATEMENT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES “CONSCIENCE PROTECTIONS”

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued new “conscience protections” for health care providers, insurers and employers who refuse to provide, participate in, pay for, or refer patients for abortion, sterilization, assisted suicide and advance directives. The rule expands on the powers of HHS’s Office for Civil Rights to enforce these protections for providers even for counseling and the provision of referral information. The Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD) stands with many professional organizations in opposing the expansion of these conscience protections. We have grave concerns about how these “protections” will negatively impact college students’ ability to get accurate information about and access to essential services. We are especially concerned about the impact on low-income and minority women, and the access to needed care and information for other populations, specifically lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and individuals living with HIV and AIDS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon L. Mitchell, Ph.D." in a cursive style.

**Sharon L. Mitchell, Ph.D.**

President, AUCCCD  
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